

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM: MINUTES**

**Date:** 16th January 2015

**Time:** 10.00 a.m. – 11.40 a.m.

**Place:** Kreis Viersen Room, Shire Hall, Cambridge

**Present:** D Barron, J Culpin, J Digby (substituting for A Day) , K Evans, P Hodgson (Chairman), A Kent, J McCrossan\*, N Jones, L Murphy, C Paskell (substituting for M Woods), S Preston, A Reeder, A Rodger (Vice-Chairman), B Smethurst, K Taylor and R Waldau

**Observers**

Cllr P Downes	Cambridgeshire County Council
G Fewtrell	Teachers' Unions
J Robinson-Judd	Ely Diocese Church of England
Cllr D Harty	Cambridgeshire County Council
S Livesey	Catholic Diocese of East Anglia
Cllr J Whitehead	Cambridgeshire County Council

**Officers**

K Grimwade, S Heywood, S Howarth, J Ryder Richardson, M Teasdale, M Wade and R Sanderson (Democratic Services)

\*part of meeting only

**Apologies:** S Connell, A Day, A Kent, J Russon and M Woods Apologies for lateness were received from Joe McCrossan.

**ACTION**

**82. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th October 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The following matters arising were discussed:

**Minute 73, Schools funding reform:** the Chairman reported on a meeting held with the Right Honourable (Rt Hon) Nicky Morgan, Education Secretary the previous week attended by himself as Chairman of the Forum, Academy Secondary Heads and the Rt Hon James Paice MP for South East Cambridgeshire. It was reported that while she supported Cambridgeshire's calls for a fairer settlement going forward, this was qualified by the fact that no commitment could be given that the adjustment for fairer funding would continue beyond the current settlement, as this would depend on the policies of the national government following the General Election in May. This was seen as disappointing and it was suggested that any such statements in writing received from Government should be passed on to schools. Martin Wade reported that he was meeting with Department for Education (DfE) officials

in the next week and would again raise the issue of 'Fairer Funding' with them and also seek a written response.

It was agreed that should the next elected national government not continue with the redirection of resources to Cambridgeshire, this would be disastrous for pupil education in the County. **Action: The Chairman / M Wade to provide any letter from DfE to be attached as an appendix to the minutes.**

**P Hodgson /  
M Wade**

With reference to the Forum Working Group notes attached as an appendix to the December minutes, an oral update indicated that a meeting with Jonathan Djanogly the Member of Parliament for Huntingdon had been arranged on 6th February. It was highlighted that he had been very supportive of their position and it was hoped that his support would lead to a meeting with the Secretary of State for Education.

It was suggested that the Forum Working Group should seek a meeting with all prospective parliamentary candidates before the General Election to sound them out on their views on the Funding position of Cambridgeshire and to also furnish them with a statement of requirements from the Group. **Action: Chairman to organise dates and invites** (*Note at the conclusion of the meeting it was agreed that the 18<sup>th</sup> March meeting should be cancelled, but that the KV Room should still be held on this date as a venue for the proposed meeting*).

**P Hodgson**

Councillor Peter Downes indicated that he was meeting with the Minister of State for Schools, David Laws, in the following week and would also reiterate the need for the continued delivery of 'Fairer Funding' post the General Election.

**Minute 75 Growth Fund and falling Rolls Criteria 2015/16** – On the action to take forward with the Department of Education (DfE) the anomaly of the Local Authority (LA) not being able to support a school affected by the building of a new school nearby unless it had been judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding' at its last Ofsted inspection, this was to be raised at the meeting organised for the following week. **Action: Martin Wade**

**M Wade**

Meredith Teasdale confirmed that she had raised the issue of whether it was better on a 10 year business basis to either build new schools or bus people to existing schools with the Planning for Growth Project Board for their further consideration.

Minute 76. New Schools Revenue Funding - It was confirmed that there would be a separate funding mechanism for Post-16 places.

In relation to primary headteachers seeking meetings with elected members and officers to examine growth in relation to voluntary aided schools (particularly roman catholic primary schools), Joe McCrossan was at the time of the current meeting, meeting separately with Hazel Belchamber Head of 0-19 Place Planning & Organisation and had indicated that if practicable he aimed to join his meeting later.

### 83. SCHOOLS BUDGET 2015/16 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG)

The Schools Finance Manager presented a summary update on schools budget setting issues for consideration for 2015/16. Key point highlighted included:

That the DSG for 2015-16 of £409 million had again been calculated on the basis of 3 notional blocks:

- Early Years Block – calculated based on all nursery age pupils (3 and 4 year olds) at £3,813 per pupil
- Schools Block – calculated based on all pre-16 school age pupils at £4,253 per pupil (adjusted for Carbon Reduction Commitment)
- High Needs Block (HNB) – based on historic spend on high needs pupils in school and Further Education (FE) Colleges.

Drawing attention to the table at 2.2 of the report setting out the detailed breakdown of the estimated level of DSG to be received in 2015/16, with the total estimated Schools Block having increased by approximately £28.6m over 2014/15 levels due to a combination of the Fairer Funding per pupil increase and the net increase in pre-16 pupil numbers. The Schools Block also included a transfer of £2.4m in respect of non-recoupment academies (NRA's), Cambourne Village College and the University Technology College (UTC).

A oral change was made to the report table in paragraph 3.1 on the Minimum Funding levels increase figure which was showing as £22.3m and was revised to a revised figure of £22.9m with the revised table now reading:

Change in Schools Block Pupil Numbers (2013/14 Funding Rates)	£3.3m
Minimum Funding Levels (MFL) Increase	£22.9m
Non-Recoupment Academies (NRA's)	£2.4m
<b>Total Schools Block Increase</b>	<b>£28.6m</b>

The allocations for 2-year-old funding was to be calculated, based on participation based on the take-up as recorded on the January 2015 census at £5.05 per hour, with a further voluntary pupil count to be undertaken in the Autumn term to allow for the expected continuing increase in numbers.

Paragraph 3.4 provided the details of the new arrangements for a new single national licence managed by the Department for Education (DfE) for all state-funded schools in England. This would result in local authorities and schools no longer having to negotiate separate licences, including those for performing and phonographic rights, which would now be included as part of the DSG subject to the top slice being confirmed. It listed the full list of agencies to be included in the new licence, although the total charge had yet to be received and as a result, affected the De-delegations to be agreed as a later report. **A final version would be circulated with the Minutes (note attached as appendix A)**

**M Wade / R Sanderson**

To reflect the rise in pupil numbers within the Special sector, it was proposed that the remaining £150k of the additional HNB be allocated to support the overall increase in the cost of Top-up funding. An additional amount of £200k had been identified to support the purchase of equipment.

The baseline High Needs Block (HNB) had received a net increase of £395k. Due to the pressures across the HNB budgets it was proposed to use £245k of this additional funding towards these pressures, with the remainder being managed from within the HNB. However it was indicated that should a year end deficit arise in the central expenditure budgets, the expectation was that this would be the first call on the future year's DSG.

It was confirmed that the Children and Young People (CYP) Committee meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2015 had agreed that the additional funding of £500k to be received in 2015/16 by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) should be allocated to the Early Years Block to avoid further reductions in funding rates for all providers. No additional funding was to be transferred into the High Needs Block, with the remainder of the additional funding to be allocated to Primary and Secondary Schools through the local formula with details provided of how the funding would be used.

Basic Entitlement values for Primary and Secondary schools had increased slightly from the original illustrative figures with the revised figures as set out in the table below. These could still be subject to changes until the final submission was made to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) on 20<sup>th</sup> January:

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Basic Entitlement per Pupil*</b>
Primary	£2,730
Secondary – Key Stage 3	£3,850
Secondary – Key Stage 4	£5,005

The key dates in the budget setting process following the current meeting were noted as follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
16 January 2015	Schools Forum
20 January 2015	Local authorities submit final data for Schools Budget pro-forma.
23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2015	Draft/Illustrative Primary and Secondary budgets to be published.
Mid February 2015	Draft Special budgets to be published.
28 February 2015	Local authorities to confirm budgets for maintained schools but the details would confirmed earlier
February-March 2015	EFA confirms Academy budgets.
18 March 2015	Schools Forum
March 2015	DfE/EFA confirms High Needs Block DSG funding to Local authorities.
31 <sup>st</sup> March 2015	S251 Budget Statement submission deadline.

### Issues raised included:

- Kim Taylor made the point that some authorities receiving the increase in their High Needs Block from the DSG settlement had passed the money straight to schools, in recognition of the additional administrative burden relating to complex needs students. She asked if officers could explore this further. Kate Evans made the point that any additional financial support for this specific additional burden should be available to all schools, and not just special schools.

**Action: Meredith Teasdale agreed to set up a meeting with appropriate officers to discuss supporting this additional administrative need.**

**M Teasdale**

- Confirming in response to a question that there was a separate grant for universal free schools meals which was adjusted for census data which came directly to the Authority where it was then passported on to schools. It was confirmed that although more people were applying for Free School Meals (FSM), fewer pupils were eligible under the criteria.
- There was discussion on the level of balances being kept by some schools. One of the secondary schools heads highlighted the need for sufficient reserves in order to pay for unexpected emergencies such as boiler replacement / roof repairs and that larger balances had been required in recent years to pay towards the cost of staff redundancies. Another headteacher highlighted importance of having reserves to help achieve a balanced budget at the end of the year. In response, it was explained that officers did challenge those maintained schools holding large year-end balances on their plans for their use, but there were still a number of schools who had larger balances than was considered necessary. It was suggested by one councillor that it would be useful for Schools Forum to receive a report on the definition of the 'appropriate level of balances' for different types of schools. **It was agreed that a report on the financial health of schools and the details of the claw-back mechanism should be the subject of a report to the next meeting.**

**Martin Wade**

The report was noted.

### **84. DE-DELEGATIONS FROM MAINTAINED PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

This report provided details of the De-delegations to be deducted from maintained schools budgets intended to facilitate the sharing of risk, reduce administrative costs and provide economies of scale which represented the primary maintained schools contribution to certain centrally managed services.

No new de-delegations were being recommended from those agreed in the previous year as shown in paragraph 2.1 of the officer's report.

However as part of the required Annual Review but some of the existing items required changes of value, with the proposed new rates set out in the table included below, with explanation provided in the report detail. The amounts were based on an estimate on the current number of academy conversions that were estimated would take place before September. The new rates had already been the subject of advance discussion with Cambridgeshire Primary Heads finance members and were for approval by Primary Head teachers present representing maintained schools.

As already referred to in the discussion on the previous report, the copyright subscriptions increase in cost, currently being predicted as a 4% increase, was still to be confirmed from the DfE. Further information would be provided to schools once received.

Clarification was sought by officers in relation to academies buy-in of the trade union time de-delegation. Scott Preston indicated this was to be discussed as an item at the next Cambridgeshire Secondary Heads (CSH) meeting. Officers would follow up by writing to all academies to check whether any were proposing to opt out.

<b><u>Item</u></b>	<b><u>De-delegation in 2015/16</u></b>	<b><u>De-delegation amount in 2015/16</u></b>	<b><u>Change in amount from 2014/15</u></b>
CREDS	£12 per pupil and £142.50 per EAL pupil	£916,558.51	-£148,318.36
The Key website	£307 per school and 50p per pupil	£72,509.31	-£750.65
Copyright subscriptions	£31 per school and 67p per pupil	£31,164.42	£457.46
Free School Meals	£4.65 per FSM pupil	£20,855.26	£1,043.48
Eligibility			
Trade Union			
Time	£1.10 per pupil	£42,217.11	-£872.36
Insurance (material damage, theft and public liability)	£16.69 per pupil	£640,548.71	£1,257.59
Maternity Scheme	£5.90 per pupil	£226,437.23	-£4,679.04
Schools in difficulty	£2.10 per pupil	£80,596.30	-£1,665.43

Barry Smethurst placed on record his support to the de-delegations being

proposed as he represented Primary School governors.

The Primary Maintained School headteachers present **resolved unanimously**:

**to agree to the continuation of the above de-delegations and proposed rates, subject to final confirmation in respect of Copyright Licences.**

## **85. EARLY YEARS FUNDING UPDATE**

Schools Forum received a report providing a summary update on the Early Years funding position for 2015/16 and covers the following main areas:

- Early Years Block element of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)
- Two-year old funding
- Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) Update
- Early Years Pupil Premium

Table 2.2 of the report provided a breakdown of the categories of the current level of Early Years Block Dedicated Schools Grant to be received in 2015/16 which totalled £21,619,200.

Key issues highlighted included:

- That the allocations for 2-year-old funding would be calculated based on participation and initial allocations would be based on the take-up as recorded on the January 2015 census at £5.05 per hour. Therefore the initial Early Years (EY) Block does not include an allocation for 2-year old funding, although based on current levels of uptake we estimate receiving initial funding in the region of £2.76m as detailed in the report. The £5.05 per hour to be received was to be directly passed on to providers delivering 2-year old places.
- Following the reduction in funding rates in 2014/15 and the move to participation funding for 2-year olds for 2015/16 it had been agreed to move £0.5m of the additional funding to be received in the Schools Block to the Early Years Block with the transfer meaning that no further reductions would be required to the EY funding base rates in 2015/16 and as such, providers would be funded as set out in the table in paragraph 3.1 of the report.
- Details were provided of the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) additional funding to support disadvantaged three and four year olds receiving the early education to be paid to local authorities through the Dedicated Schools Grant and LA's will be required to pass it onto early years providers for each eligible child at the hourly rate of 53p per hour. All registered early years providers that took children for the funded early education entitlement would be eligible to claim the EYPP for eligible three- and four-year-olds. Providers would be free to determine how the funding was spent,

with the expectation it would be used to improve the quality of early years' education for their disadvantaged children. Paragraph 4.3 of the report set out the eligibility criteria. Details were provided of the additional allocation received by Cambridgeshire as an early implementer.

It was resolved to note the report.

## **85. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEND) COMMISSIONING STRATEGY UPDATE ON NEXT STEPS**

This report provided details of the purpose of the SEND Commissioning Strategy which had been designed to plan for the current and future needs of children and young people with SEND to enable them to achieve good outcomes. The report provided a summary on the key issues and next steps for implementing the SEND Commissioning Strategy and sought Forum's views on the best ways of engaging schools and educational settings to participate in planning future services and provision for children and young people with SEND.

It was highlighted that:

- the County had both a higher percentage of pupils with an identified SEND than nationally and also compared with similar comparator authorities. Officers were seeking to review the level of identification of SEND, due to the increasing financial pressures on schools and the Local Authority, as they were becoming unsustainable, especially within the context of an increasing population of 0-19 year olds. This included:
  - looking to reduce the number of formal statements which was a high cost / resource intense process through earlier identification of needs.
  - looking at lower cost models, including reducing the number of out of county placements and providing more specialist provision in-house.
- officers were developing more detailed commissioning plans for the main areas of SEND collaboratively with service users, stakeholders, providers, and partners to provide more detailed information on how it was proposed to meet needs over the next five years, as well as the projected spend required over the next 10 years . It was expected that the information would be ready by the end of April 2015, and would be circulated to the Schools Forum for information and for comments in the Summer term.
- Attention was drawn to the fact that over the last two years there had been a rise in permanent exclusions within primary schools. As a result, officers were reviewing the arrangements for delivering a faster response to schools where there was a risk of permanent exclusion. **One Member asked for details of the cost of outside tutoring to the primary school budget as a result of permanent**

**Jane Ryder**



**exclusions.** As this information was not at hand, it was agreed that it would be investigated and the Forum provided with details following the meeting. **Action: Jane Ryder Richardson**

**Richardson**

Another member of Forum highlighted work being looked into on the link between high emotional needs, mental health issues relating to deprivation and high pressure areas.

Issues highlighted by Members of Forum in discussion included:

- highlighting that work had been undertaken in other authorities on the effect of low funding that should be accessed. In discussion it was however noted that some low funded authorities also had a low number of statements and that Cambridgeshire went against many statistical trends in this respect.
- Work needed to be undertaken to understand the reasons for clusters of special needs, for which again there was already available research that could be accessed.
- Officers' providing different choice scenario models in relation to a flat cash plan and models for plus and minus 10% as part of looking at whether SEND funding was being directed to the most appropriate areas.
- The Chairman requested that he should be provided with data on SEND demand / pressures to be able to pass on to Secretary of State to help support the request for additional resources. (Note: This data which had been prepared in October but through an oversight had not been passed on and was provided to the Chairman and Vice Chairman at the close of the meeting in both hard copy and electronic format)
- Concern was expressed about proposals to try to reduce the number of Statements, as this was a key trigger for schools to receive extra resources, with one observer suggesting that it may not be in schools' interests to support such an approach.
- The need for clearer information on completing Statements to ensure sufficient information was provided to help reduce the additional work associated with the incidence of having to send them back with a request for further information.

**J Ryder  
Richardson  
/  
Democratic  
Services**

In terms of potential members for a working group to look at planning future SEND services:

- Barry Smethurst highlighted that Primary Governors should be involved, as many had appropriate, specialist skills.
- Kim Taylor volunteered to be a member – she also made reference to the Guidance Document - Building Bulletin 101 - which set out space standards required for SEND provision which should be

taken into account when planning for the future.

- Jonathan Culpin on behalf of Cambs Secondary Heads expressed interest in being involved.
- Cambs Primary Heads also expressed an interest to be involved in any new group.

The report was noted.

#### **86. FORWARD PLAN**

Noted.

As there were very few items for the 18<sup>th</sup> March Forum meeting and as there were issues in relation to some Forum members being able to attend:

**it was agreed that the 18<sup>th</sup> March Schools Forum should be cancelled** and the KV Room booking retained as a venue for the proposed meeting with Parliamentary candidates in order to brief them of the County's Education Funding shortfall and the need for their support if elected to continue to lobby Government for a fairer settlement.

**Democratic  
Services**

#### **87. FORWARD PLAN**

Forum noted its agenda plan and that the 18<sup>th</sup> March items would be moved to the July meeting.

#### **88. ASSESSMENT FROM SUB-GROUP MEETINGS AND FEEDBACK FROM HEAD TEACHERS' STEERING GROUPS**

There were no updates.

#### **89. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

As the 18<sup>th</sup> March meeting had been agreed to be cancelled the next meeting of the Forum would be held on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May. The subsequent meeting if still required would be on Friday 3rd July 2015.

In relation to the dates beyond July 2015 agreed at the last meeting which had been agreed as follows:

- 10 a.m. Friday 16th October 2015
- 10 a.m. Wednesday 16th December 2015
- 10 a.m. Friday 15th January 2016
- 10 a.m. Friday 18th March 2016
- 10 a.m. Friday 24th June 2016.

with reference to Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2016 meeting, this had now been identified as clashing with a County Council Policy Planning date which would result in the County Councillor observers being unable to attend.

This being the case, it was suggested that the Wednesday of the same week should be used as a replacement date.

**It was resolved:**

**To amend the date of the March 2016 date from Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March to Wednesday 10 a.m. 16<sup>th</sup> March and agree that Democratic Services confirm the provisional electronic invite already sent for the latter and cancel the invitation for the 18<sup>th</sup>.**

**DAVID BARRON**

As it was David's last Forum meeting the Chairman took the opportunity to thank him for his invaluable support and challenge during his time on the Forum and all present expressed their appreciation with a round of applause

Chairman  
22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015